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CONSTRUCTION

Construction Cost Guide Riviera Maya 2026

Real prices per m² · Land · Permits · Timelines · Mistakes to avoid
Data from 196+ projects built since 2008

18+ years

196+ projects

Fixed price

1. Cost per m² by finish level (2026)

Level	MXN/m ²	USD/m ²	150 m ² house
Budget — basic finishes, no pool	\$12,000– \$14,000	\$650–\$780	\$97,500– \$117,000
Mid-range — good finishes, small pool	\$15,000– \$19,000	\$830–\$1,050	\$124,500– \$157,500
Premium — imported materials, rooftop	\$20,000– \$25,000	\$1,100– \$1,400	\$165,000– \$210,000
Luxury — architect design, smart home, infinity pool	\$25,000+	\$1,400+	\$210,000+

Includes: foundation, structure, walls, roof, electrical and plumbing, floors, kitchen and bathrooms, windows and doors. Not included: land, architectural design, permits, furniture, solar panels.

2. Cost by location

Zone	MXN/m ²	Note
Playa del Carmen	\$12,000–\$25,000	Best infrastructure, fastest permits
Tulum	\$14,000–\$30,000	SEMA permit mandatory (+10–20%)
Puerto Aventuras	\$15,000–\$28,000	Marina community, premium finishes
Cancún	\$12,000–\$24,000	Hotel Zone premium; suburbs cheaper
Akumal / Puerto Morelos	\$12,000–\$28,000	Protected areas, special permits
Bacalar	\$10,000–\$18,000	Emerging market

3. Land prices (2026)

Zone	Price per m ²	200 m ² lot
Ejido / PDC outskirts	\$1,500–\$3,000 MXN	\$16,000–\$33,000 USD
PDC residential zone	\$4,000–\$8,000 MXN	\$44,000–\$88,000 USD
Playacar / beach zone	\$15,000–\$30,000 MXN	\$166,000–\$333,000 USD
Tulum (La Veleta, Región 15)	\$2,800–\$7,500 MXN	\$31,000–\$83,000 USD

Important: always verify the land is NOT ejido before buying. Foreigners buy through a bank trust (fideicomiso): setup \$1,500–\$3,000 USD, annual fee \$500–\$800 USD.

4. Complete budget: real example

Mid-range 150 m² house with pool in Playa del Carmen:

Land (200 m ² , residential zone)	\$65,000 USD
Architectural design	\$5,000 USD
Permits & legal	\$3,500 USD
Construction (150 m ² × \$950/m ²)	\$142,500 USD
Pool (4×8 m)	\$12,000 USD
Perimeter wall	\$4,000 USD
TOTAL	\$232,000 USD

5. Permits & timeline

Stage	Duration
Design & architecture	4-8 weeks
Municipal permits (+ SEMA in Tulum)	4-12 weeks (Tulum: up to 16)
Foundation & structure	8-12 weeks
Walls, roof, installations	8-12 weeks
Finishes & details	6-10 weeks
Total turnkey	12-18 months

6. How to save 15-20%

1. **Build in low season** (May-September): labor and materials are 10-15% cheaper.
2. **Local materials:** chukum, local stone and tropical hardwoods instead of imports (saves up to 40% on finishes).
3. **One full-service contractor** instead of 5 subcontractors each adding margin.
4. **Simple geometry:** rectangular floor plans cost 20% less than L-shapes and curves.
5. **No basement:** the high water table makes basements extremely expensive in the Riviera Maya.

7. The 5 mistakes that cost \$20,000+ USD

1. **Skipping the soil study** — rock or cenote under the foundation = \$5,000-\$15,000 extra.
2. **Hiring by lowest price** — they cut corners on rebar, waterproofing and electrical.
3. **No written fixed-price contract** — costs rise 15-25%.
4. **Ignoring hurricane codes** — retrofitting later costs 3× more.

5. **Changing design mid-build** — moving a poured wall = demolish and rebuild.

8. Checklist before signing with any builder

- RFC and Acta Constitutiva (registered company)
- Workers registered with IMSS (social security)
- Visit 3+ completed projects in person
- Talk to 2+ past clients
- Written contract with scope, timeline and milestones
- Line-item budget breakdown
- Payments tied to construction progress (never more than 15-20% upfront)
- Licensed architect / DRO on the project
- Written structural warranty (minimum 1 year)

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